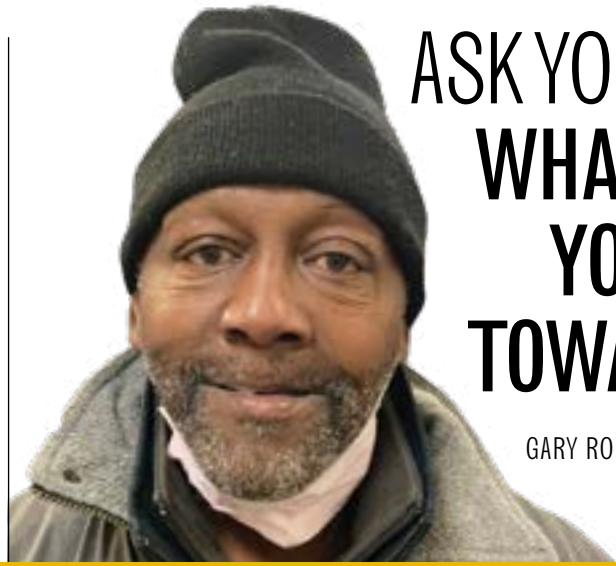


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MARCH 10, 2023 | VOLUME 14 | ISSUE 6

YOUR DONATION BENEFITS THE VENDORS.
PLEASE BUY ONLY FROM BADGED VENDORS.

Non-police crisis response piloting
in Ypsilanti. **Page 11**



ASK YOUR VENDOR:
**WHAT GOAL ARE
YOU WORKING
TOWARDS RIGHT
NOW?**

GARY ROBINSON, #224

GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

Boober seeds bearing fruit — Kevin
helped me and so many others.
page 8



Kevin Spangler, Groundcover vendor No. 307 and founder of Boober Tours, driving a pedicab in downtown Ann Arbor. Photo credit: Barry Chatillion.

THIS PAPER WAS BOUGHT FROM

venmo



@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

from the **DIRECTOR's DESK**



If you attended Street Wisdom, the Groundcover News open mic honoring Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, you already know our writers and vendors have a lot more to say than just what meets the page. Street Wisdom packed the house and had a lasting impact on many who attended. Ever since that Friday in November at Argus Farm Stop, we've been excited to secure another time to share space as a community.

At the end of March, Groundcover News will be hosting a two-part event entitled "Hear Me Out."

Friday, March 24, we invite writers (and future writers!) with lived experience to a workshop on building narrative power. The workshop will be led by journalist and poverty solutions advocate Lauren Slagter. "Op-ed" might technically stand for "opposite the editorial page," but here at Groundcover we consider the "op-ed" simply a powerful tool for communicating informed opinion to large audiences. Together we will practice linking our own compelling stories and experiences to quantitative data and calls to action in order to inspire social change. Come with an idea, or a piece already written. Even the best writers need an editor!

The day after that, Saturday, March 25, 6-8 p.m. at Argus Farm Stop (Liberty Cafe) we invite all community members to an open mic where workshop participants will speak out, reading the individual projects borne out of the workshop. Time permitting, we will open the floor to everyone to speak on their experiences with social injustices.

Hear Me Out — you don't want to miss this one!

HEAR ME OUT!

GROUNDCOVER
NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

A GROUNDCOVER NEWS COMMUNITY OPEN MIC

MARCH 25TH, 6-8PM
ARGUS FARM STOP, LIBERTY CAFE

Join the Groundcover News community for another open mic centering on community perspectives on social injustices!

A WORKSHOP ON BUILDING NARRATIVE POWER

MARCH 24TH, 2-4:30PM
ANN ARBOR DISTRICT LIBRARY
DOWNTOWN BRANCH - FREESPACE

- Join journalist Lauren Slager and Groundcover News for an op-ed writing workshop at the Ann Arbor District Library.
- Link lived experience with a call to action to inspire change in your community!
- Participants will be invited to speak at the following open mic and publish in Groundcover News.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

CREATING **OPPORTUNITY** AND A **VOICE** FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE WHILE TAKING ACTION TO END HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for \$2, keeping all income and tips from each sale.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

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ASK YOUR VENDOR

What goal are you working towards right now?

- Getting a car, then getting an apartment.
— Gary Robinson, #224
- I am working towards getting my t-shirt business off the ground, I'm working to be a better person and trying to educate myself on financial literacy.
— Joe Woods, #103
- Ultimately, I'm working towards being somebody that my kids to look up to. Right now that means selling the paper more and stabilizing my life.
— Sean Almond, #561
- My goal is to graduate from college, to get my journalism and audio engineering associate's degree.
—Mike Jones, #113
- That's personal.
— James Tennant, #174
- Peace in my life.
— Larzell Washington, #128
- I got a voucher so I'm working on getting an apartment.
—Mansell Williams #96
- To be here. I'm working to be, and stay, present in my own life.
—Ken Parks, #490
- I'm working on getting my dental health figured out and working on getting housing!
— Glen Page, #407

What would YOU ask?

If you have a question you would like Groundcover vendors to answer in this column, email us at contact@groundcovernews.com

We will be featuring vendor responses in future issues.

The joys of St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day is a great, festive holiday. It's a good reason to have fun. It's a good excuse to eat good corned beef sandwiches. It's a good excuse to eat potatoes for the day. St. Patrick's Day is also a good day to make corned beef stew. And it's a good excuse to drink green lime punch, if you don't want to drink beer.

Green is one of my favorite colors and people wear a lot of green on St. Patrick's Day. I love to go to St. Patrick's Day parades and see a lot of beautiful clothing and beautiful things. The last time I went to a St. Patrick's Day parade was in the 90s. It was in downtown Detroit. I had just made a new friend; she was with one of her friends and we went to the parade. Dennis Archer



was the mayor at the time and he waved at me. I saw men in kilts, which is like a man's skirt. I saw women in beautiful crocheted green hats. Afterwards we went to a restaurant and had corned beef sandwiches. That was a good day.

I like to make beautiful St. Patrick's Day artwork. I love going to St. Patrick's Day parties with my friends.

I love Irish music, too. St. Patrick's Day music is soothing for when you are just relaxing at home, or doing housework. St. Patrick's Day music is good when you are partying, too.

St. Patrick's Day can also be a spiritual holiday because St. Patrick was a saint. It can also be romantic — just like Valentine's Day — because you can celebrate it with people you love. Both St. Patrick and St. Valentine were saints.

I always love celebrating both holidays!

Truth or lies: King Charman the leprechaun

In the year 1600 BC, King Charman Plenza was ordered by the Forest Fairies to wed by St. Patrick's Day.

Queen Zia of the fairies warned him if he did not wed, all would be lost. The kingdom would fall and the forest would disappear and he would turn into a leprechaun. The king laughed and insisted that this was a tall tale.

Four days before St. Patrick's Day, Zia appeared before the king pleading for him to find a bride. King Charman was a young, handsome, playful man, who never took his responsibilities seriously. The morning of March 17, 1600 BC, King Charman awoke feeling energetic and curious. Eager to fulfill his kingly duties he walked to his dressing table and looked in the mirror. He saw no one. The king thought, "What is the meaning of this?" He looked again; still he could not see himself.

Just as he was speaking, the king's hands and feet turned into a leprechaun form.

The king called for his servant Oswaw. King Charman told Oswaw that he could not see his reflection in the mirror. Oswaw said, "Hold it, what have you done with King Charman? You will be beheaded!"

The king said, "What do you mean? I am the king!"

Osawa said, "The king is not a leprechaun."



The king hollered, "Oh no! I am a leprechaun; the fable has come true, oh no!"

The castle started rumbling, then it started sinking. The king hollered for everyone to flee the castle. As he ran outside for cover, he noticed the forest starting to disappear. King Charman was all alone within an hour, as if he never existed. The forest was gone. King Charman sat on a stoop and cried out for the fairies. The fairies were gone with the forest. King Charman went into hiding. Time passed.

Decades passed, centuries passed, still Charman stayed hidden.

In the year of 1300 BC, Charman was hiding in the redwood trees (they were his favorite). He heard voices and Charman jumped up to go see where they were coming from. It was Judy, Trina and their cousin, Regina, who were setting

up camp. The trio would often venture out on camping trips.

Charman watched from a short distance. He was curious about the tents they were putting together. He noticed Regina; her hair was a golden red and she had green eyes. Charman fell in love, constantly watching her. He decided to leave her a path of flowers leading to the river.

Regina would wash the dishes at the river twice a day. She noticed the path of flowers, laughing, wondering who placed them there. Charman knew he had only one chance to woo her. The next afternoon he placed her a bouquet of flowers by the river. She noticed the flowers, giggling, wondering who left them.

He finally got up enough nerve to speak to her. He said, "Hello my name is King Charman." She looked and did not see anyone. He then said, "Can you find a four leaf clover please?"

Regina laughed and said, "Who is asking?"

"King Charman, I am!"

"Where are you?" Regina asked. Charman said, "You must find a four leaf clover in order to see me."

Regina asked, "How would I find that clover?"

Charman said, "Over there, just look through the grass, you will

see **KING CHARMAN** page 7 ➡

The Ann Arbor rental market is a pretty scary place

Imagine paying thousands of dollars for various fees months before living in your apartment. This is the reality for Ann Arbor renters. In addition, tenants experience a lack of maintenance, instability, renewal struggles, landlords dodging legislation, and waitlists, not to mention immense cost!

Finding a place to rent is vital for those who aren't ready to invest in a house. Over the past decades, deceitful landowner tactics have made the process of finding housing extremely difficult and downright unfair.

I sat down with Zachariah Farah, University of Michigan alumnus and current member of the Ann Arbor Renters Commission, to discuss these landlord tactics. As a member of the Central Student Government, he was approached by the Graduate Employees' Organization's Housing Caucus for support in changing the city's Early Leasing Ordinance.

The ELO determines when a landlord can ask for renewal. At the time, landlords had the liberty to ask for renewal only 70 days into the present lease term. If you were to decline this renewal opportunity, your home could be rented to a new tenant. This was a pressure tactic by landlords. With only 70 days in your unit, how would you know whether you want to



SAMIHA RAHMAN
U-M student contributor

continue living there or not?

CSG drafted an amendment to the Early Leasing Ordinance, which was passed by City Council in 2021. Although CSG and GEO were requesting the time be extended to 210 days into the lease, they were only able to get the date amended to 150 days, offering light reassurance that your unit won't be shown or rented out to someone else.

Upset landlords immediately dashed to find loopholes. Landlords implemented waitlists, exploiting prospective tenants, charging them a "waitlist fee" with no guarantee for a unit. Landlords take advantage of desperate students and residents looking for extremely limited housing, creating a sense of false hope and charging more money than

necessary.

Nowadays, what happens if you *do* agree to renew your lease? The landlord must accept your wish, regardless of how many individuals are on a waiting list. In 2022, Ann Arbor passed Right to Renew, requiring landlords to make a good faith renewal offer to current tenants. If landlords don't comply, they are required to pay a two-month relocation stipend. This law is designed to prioritize the stability of current tenants.

GEO's Housing Caucus is also starting conversation around rent stabilization to help fight the ridiculous cost of rent. However, in Michigan, municipal-level rent control is preempted by state law. Many tenants around Michigan are seeking a reversal of the state-level preemption. This would allow cities to have control and start acting right now to control the high cost of rent.

see **RENTAL** page 7 ➔

GET CONNECTED

The Renters Commission is looking to fill two vacant tenant seats. Individuals belonging to historically underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. Applications are especially welcomed from individuals with disabilities, individuals who have experienced housing insecurity, individuals who have enrolled in low income/ Section 8 housing, or individuals belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups. Applicants need not be renters, though some personal experience with renting or struggling to rent is preferred.

You can read more about the Commission here:

a2gov.org/renterscommission

To apply, please fill out this application form:

<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Page.aspx?M=Q>

If you have any questions, please email

renterscommission@a2gov.org

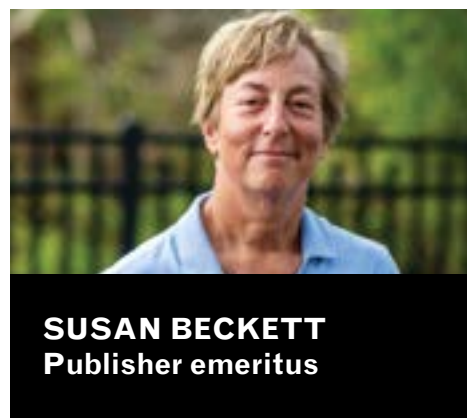
Housing issues and solutions in northern Michigan

Housing shortages plague the entire state of Michigan but the causes — with the exception of NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) — and solutions vary by locale.

It is difficult to find suitable sites to build on around Ann Arbor. In northern Michigan it is difficult to find the skilled tradesman needed to build housing. Ironically, that shortage of workers is due in large part to the lack of affordable housing.

Rural areas also often have greater difficulty getting approved for Low Income Housing Tax Credits. (The federal government offers tax credits to private investors like banks that use that money to help finance the construction of low-income housing.)

"There has to be some kind of funding that usually comes from the state or federal level to subsidize it a little bit, just because it's so expensive to build," said Corey Monroe, development coordinator for Haan Development which is building 60 units of affordable housing on Emmet St. in Petoskey. They received assistance



SUSAN BECKETT
Publisher emeritus

from the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation's Emmet Housing Solutions Fund after they were denied the tax credit funding.

In vacation destinations such as Grand Traverse, Charlevoix and Emmet counties, 32% of housing is non-homestead (rental properties or second homes) and the cost of an average house ranges from \$500,000 to \$600,000, depending on the county. Across the ten counties served by the non-profit Housing North, 40% of the population is rent-burdened.

The cost of living there is high, too — comparable to that of Washtenaw County — but they generally lack services such as public transportation that help make ends meet. Exceptions include Boyne City which offers Monday through Saturday daytime pickup and drop-off anywhere in Charlevoix County, and Traverse City which has public buses Monday through Saturday. Both have consistently made choices to maintain livability for a large cross-section of residents.

Some remedies to the affordable housing shortage could be implemented this year. American Rescue Program Act funds for shovel-ready projects should include projects that increase the housing stock for low and moderate income families.

A renter's tax credit, issued monthly by the IRS, could help some middle-income year-round residents afford to rent properties that are typically occupied just a few months each year by vacationers, or only during the school year by college students. It would also

provide relief to the multitude of low and middle-income renters whose rent exceeds 30% of their income.

Currently, the primary beneficiaries of our tax code are wealthy individuals and corporations, often at the expense of those with lower incomes or little wealth. Congress spends approximately \$200 billion per year on housing, but the majority of that goes to the highest income households through benefits like the mortgage interest deduction. The wealthiest seven million households in the country receive more housing assistance through tax credits than the 55 million lowest-income renters, according to a 2017 article in The Hill.

There are four new Michigan laws granting municipalities greater power to offer tax-reduction incentives to build affordable housing within their boundaries. Maybe that will persuade some developers to build for ordinary people instead of the wealthy. And maybe it's time to adjust the federal tax code to discourage the ownership of multiple houses.



TENANT RIGHTS: Fair access to housing

Ann Arbor's Non-Discrimination Ordinance and Fair Chance Access to Housing Ordinance provide protections to those seeking rental housing.

The **NON-DISCRIMINATION ORDINANCE** requires that no one be denied housing because of their actual or perceived age, arrest record, color, disability, educational association, ethnicity, familial status (e.g., having children), family responsibilities, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, height, HIV status, marital status, national origin, political beliefs, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, source of income (e.g., using housing vouchers), veteran status, being a victim of domestic violence or stalking, or weight.

The **FAIR CHANCE ACCESS TO HOUSING ORDINANCE** eliminates the use of criminal history in tenant selection by Ann Arbor housing providers so that people with criminal records have a fair opportunity to compete for rental housing and reside with family members and others. The ordinance applies to all landlords in the City of Ann Arbor and went into effect April 18, 2021.

HOUSING PROVIDERS SHALL NOT:

- ✗ INQUIRE ABOUT AN APPLICANT'S CRIMINAL HISTORY
- ✗ REQUIRE AN APPLICANT TO DISCLOSE THEIR CRIMINAL HISTORY
- ✗ REQUIRE AN APPLICANT TO AUTHORIZE THE RELEASE OF THEIR CRIMINAL HISTORY

*Housing providers may conduct criminal background checks **ONLY** when required to do so by federal or state law. The denial of housing by a housing provider because of a past criminal conviction may be based **ONLY** on state and federal requirements*.*

If required by federal or state law to conduct a criminal background check, the housing provider must first:

- ✓ Give the applicant a conditional offer to rent,
- ✓ Provide advance written notice to the applicant describing the specific federal and/or state requirements the applicant must meet, and
- ✓ Request written consent from the applicant or allow the applicant to withdraw the rental application.

If the housing provider withdraws the offer of housing because the applicant's criminal history does not meet federal or state requirements, the housing provider must provide the applicant a written notice that includes:

- ✓ The reason(s) for the withdrawal,
- ✓ The criminal history report or other information that served as the basis for the withdrawal,
- ✓ An opportunity for the applicant to respond, and
- ✓ Instructions on how to file a complaint.

This ordinance does not apply to public housing authorities (e.g., Ann Arbor Housing Commission) or permanent supportive housing providers (e.g., Avalon, homeless service providers). Their goal is to house those who need it most whenever possible.

TO FILE A COMPLAINT OF A VIOLATION OF THE NON-DISCRIMINATION ORDINANCE OR FAIR CHANCE ACCESS TO HOUSING ORDINANCE:

Complete a complaint form at www.a2gov.org/humanrights
Email: HRC@a2gov.org or call 734.794.6141 for more information.

* An applicant who has qualified to receive federally subsidized housing vouchers has met federal requirements. A subsequent criminal background check on that applicant by a housing provider should therefore not cause the housing provider to deny housing to the applicant.



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The 2023 Family Read is National Book Award Finalist Maizy's Chen's Last Chance by Lisa Yee. Throughout March you'll find activities related to the book at all YDL locations, including a kick-off celebration March 11, Spring Break activities, and much more. Visit ypsilibrary.org/maizy-chens-last-chance to learn more. Don't forget to reserve your copy of the book today!





Installation image of Dopamine Dressing by Charlie Edwards.

Dopamine dressing is so much more than putting on a pretty outfit

It's no secret that wearing clothes you love drastically changes the outcome of your day. Allow me to present the idea of dopamine dressing: the act of putting on clothes that make you happy.

I explored this concept after visiting the University of Michigan Museum of Art in February to see YehRim Lee's new exhibit with the same name.

What is dopamine dressing really?

Dopamine dressing consists of putting on brighter-colored clothing with a personal, meaningful backstory to boost your mood. Its goal is to allow believers to have more freedom in their fashion choices and challenge them to be bold. While not scientific by any means, the intention behind dopamine dressing is extremely powerful.

With such a title, I expected the UMMA's Dopamine Dressing exhibition to be filled with brightly colored clothing. I was instead surrounded with 21 neon and pastel clay sculptures. Initially alarmed, I truly experienced the idea of dopamine dressing in action. This begs the question, does the experience of dopamine dressing — or art in general — bring one happiness?

At the small but mighty exhibit, I was able to spend a small chunk of my day exploring this question.

Lee's use of color and sculpture entranced me. With most pieces being around two square feet I was able to see the level of detail and thought put into every curve and color layer.



ANGELINA AKDIS
U-M student contributor

Some of my favorite pieces included "Three Hearts are Trouble" and "Wall Flower Green #2." The amount of detail associated with each layer of paint and overlap of clay was astounding. Each time I walked around to look at a piece I found a new detail or section that intrigued me. Even though the room was relatively small, I could stay there for hours examining each sculpture from every angle. I was struck by how the production of dopamine transcends the act of dressing or viewing art.

YehRim Lee, a Chinese ceramic artist, uses her art to capture the human condition. With a goal to have viewers look closer at life through her art she uses multiple painted layers and complex structures to challenge their thoughts. When I looked at her pieces I could see this in her colors. As a result of her constant re-firing technique I was prompted to think about constant human evolution — not only in style but in evolving tastes — reflecting how our dopamine triggers are

consistently evolving.

After exploring, I've come to the conclusion that it is the intentional experience of wanting happiness that brings you dopamine in the first place. As seen in Lee's exhibit, happiness comes in many shapes and forms. Walking around the small but colorful room exploring the intricacies of each piece I was brought happiness. I, however, truly enjoy exploring art. This may not bring others the same satisfaction.

At the very least Dopamine Dressing

further shows me how art has the ability to evoke emotions, inspire new perspectives, and bring people together. Whether it's through the beauty of a sculpture, the excitement of live performance, or the thought-provoking messages conveyed in a film, art can play a significant role in promoting well-being and happiness for those who engage with it. I highly recommend carving out 30 minutes of your day to view it!

Dopamine Dressing is on display until August 2023 and free to view.



YehRim Lee in her studio. Photo credit: U-M Penny Stamps School.

➤ KING CHARMAN from page 3

find it."

Regina laughed, and proceeded to find the clover, thinking one of her friends was playing a joke on her. Regina reached down, and grabbing a handful of grass, searched through it. Finally after five minutes she found a clover, holding it up saying, "I found one!"

Charman said, "You won't be scared, will you? I'm a leprechaun." "A what! A leprechaun doesn't exist!"

Charman explained what happened to him, waiting for her reaction. Regina told him she would not be scared, she wanted to see a leprechaun.

The king came out of hiding. Regina looked and said, "You are real!"

Charman remembered he was running out of time. He had two days before St. Patrick's Day. He asked Regina if she would grant him a favor. Regina said, "Maybe, what is it?"

Charman said, "Will you marry me?"

She said, "What? Marry you? You are a leprechaun!" said Regina.

Charman explained how he would turn back into a twenty-five-year-old man if she married him. He told her he only had two days left, and to please help him. Regina thought about what he said, laughing and still

not believing Charman. However she wanted to see if it was real, and agreed to marry him.

He said, "If you put on this ring you would be my wife." The ring was a green four leaf clover encased in twenty-carat gold. She looked at the ring. Her heart pounded; she placed it on her ring finger. Regina looked at Charman: he started to transform right before her eyes.

"Thank you, my love," King Charman Plenza said, "and you will be Queen Regina Plenza."

He asked her to wait at the river while he went to retrieve his ancient treasure of gold, diamond and gems. Once he returned, Regina could not believe her good fortune. Every St. Patrick's Day he gave her a new gem for rescuing him. Their union lasted through ten decades. Forever loving each other!



Thank you Truth Or Lies readers, "The Unexpected Valentine," published February 10, was based on a TRUE story. However, the places and names were changed.

➤ RENTAL from page 4

Different cities have different situations, so providing individual freedom is most sensible.

Farah also discussed some of the Renters' Commission's work surrounding rental fees. The list seems endless — security deposits, waitlist fees, application fees and even a no-hassle fee (a real thing).

Farah expressed his disappointment. "These are hundreds of dollars people are not going to get back," he explained. "We want the city to regulate those."

The Renters' Commission is currently analyzing these fees to provide the council with a report. Landlords claim tenants will receive all of these fees back; however, often this does not happen. Tenants often must resort to extreme lengths, like threatening legal action, to be heard.

Tactics like simply being assertive, or underutilized resources like small claims court and the Student Legal Services at U-M can save tenants hundreds of dollars. If you are waiting on obtaining a fee/security deposit back or have been waiting for over a month to have something repaired, U-M

students have access to free lawyers waiting to provide free legal advice that might prevent the need to go to court.

Those who aren't U-M students can email the Renter's Commission at KVanderLugt@A2gov.org for assistance. Landlords are also required to provide a physical copy of the "Rights and Duties of Tenants" booklet when tenants move in, with noncompliance subject to a \$500 fine.

So how did this problem of acquiring fair housing within Ann Arbor even come about in the first place? One factor is that the University of Michigan is rapidly increasing the population of Ann Arbor, with more students, staff, and faculty every year. One solution is for the University to pay its fair share by contributing to the affordable housing fund, a city fund that supports the construction of lower-cost housing within the city to accommodate the growing population. The University is not living up to its responsibility, and definitely not using its full ability, considering its considerable endowment and the prominent role they have played in this complication.

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Boober seeds bearing fruit — Kevin helped me and so many others

I hadn't spoken with Kevin Spangler in quite some time. I met him when I was homeless. He gave me a job, gave me some inspiration, gave me some hope. He taught me some valuable, memorable lessons (mix LSD, pedicabs, foreign exchange students, Buddha, swimming, nakedness, Barton Pond, but that's another story...).

The night we spoke five months ago, he was tired. To be a Boober driver is not the easiest job, if only because of the schedule — awake when bar night-life begins (around 9 p.m.), cabbage through this time till usually 3 or 4 a.m., and then the wind-down takes an hour or two simply from the exercise and the excitement. Then up for the games, or campus events, catching naps in between.

When you're in rehabilitation (as anyone who has been through addiction knows), sleep time is treasured moments whenever you get them. Most of the employees when I worked for Spangler were either just out of jail, had felonies, were homeless or were trying to get clean. Besides this, employees would try to keep the enthusiasm that the owner held and expected. "Boober Tours, the only way!" was the common greeting.

He was the example. On each cab read "Boober Tours, the only way!" He asked his employees before being hired to do one thing: "Give me two lists, 1) one hundred reasons to stay sober and 2) one hundred reasons why drugs screwed up your life." I personally only got to 40 or so on each list. He still hired me.

Seeing him tired was rare for me. This Kevin was a bit different. The glow behind the eyes was still there, simply dimmed. I know this was the same man who with a conscious mind tried to better himself in some way each day while determined to possibly inspire any of the many individuals he came into contact with on a daily basis, direct reflections of his Buddhist practices.

"Advertising," he said. His eye had a different spark which, good or bad, was there. His new book was "Rising Out of Depression and Going up the Royal Road." I asked about the telling of his story and sharing this with customers. Most of the sayings that were printed on the middle compartment of the pedicab for any passenger to see were now taped or painted over — his business being just that, a business.

He had a number of drivers, people who wanted to work, who loved to earn that money and now had Boober



as a job not just to get by or to start over, but as their main income.

I asked him about the new bike lanes, his current employees, his thoughts on the growth in Ann Arbor. He now has 15 regular employees. Two years ago, kids would line up to drive for him during a football game.

All his vehicles are now electric! I love this as I was a bit lazy and loved the electric bikes, always vying for them. I bet he would love them humanly operated, but the physical prowess to do such takes an athlete, and to keep employees with the enthusiasm he does, the electric makes it easier. And of course, the environment, another main reason for his business. Residents rent his cabs (groups, family or friends or students, 6+ seaters) to shop at the local stores, all on a cab (electric) to cover greater distances than one would do in a car. It is simply smart.

It's taken me five months to write this, simply because Boober Tours was in the middle of changing their shop location again. Any small business person knows the difficulties of renting a place in any city; with the growth of downtown Ann Arbor in the last few years, renting as a human for personal use or renting space as a business, is still very difficult.

This is Boober's Tours' third location. The business and Kevin have outgrown the previous two locations. He must be doing something right. Right?

I questioned a volunteer at one of the University of Michigan museums and asked her if she had ever been on one of the rickshaw cabs, the people who ride around on bicycles with a cab on back. She laughed. She had some friends visit from out of town, a bit of money in their pockets, and she convinced them to ride a "Boober Cab" — they thought it would be a waste.

Similar to every ride I had as a driver, the passengers always loved the experience. She said the same! They probably could have taken a limo or something; they took a "Boober Cab" and loved it!

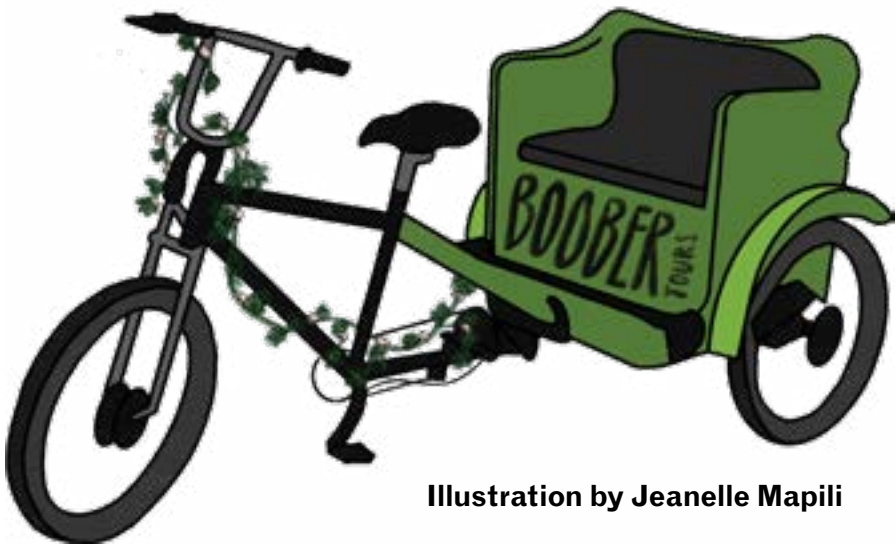


Illustration by Jeanelle Mapili

I would guess every business has its growing pains and tries to remain true to its ideals. Those who know where Kevin came from, where he is today, and how many people he helped — giving them a job when no one else would — would be proud of him.

In this short history of Ann Arbor, not a blink in anything (his Buddhist teachings affecting me?) and to have Boober Tours be a current landmark in my time with Ann Arbor and U-M in itself is a great accomplishment. I know he helped me and many others during our time in recovery. Those people will be affected for the rest of their lives. I also know that anyone and everyone who does take a ride from Boober loves it!

I asked him, "Kevin, what is your current goal?"

"A moral self-governing society in the next 50 years."

That sounded pretty f-ing great to me. To quote Joni Mitchell and her words from her song "California:"

*Reading the news
and it sure looks bad
They won't give peace a chance
That was just a dream some of us had*

It — Boober Tours — was just a dream Kevin had. I believe Joni was talking of a bigger picture. Those 1960s-1970s hippie activists took on the whole pie, knowing it would take years, but still they planted seeds in us that have been growing for years. Seven years sober he has now! Congrats Kevin!

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

EXCEPTIONAL COMMUNITY MEMBER EDITION

This April Groundcover News will be publishing a special edition magazine that will highlight exceptional people in our community ... however you choose to define exceptional! Choose someone and either interview them, write a biography or discuss with them what it means to be an active member of our community. Be creative in your methods to convey their story or message!

Like all of Groundcover News publications, everyone is invited to submit!

DEADLINE: MARCH 20TH, 12PM

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Sudoku

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Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling past monthly issues.
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- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other

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- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
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- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
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- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.

WORD SEARCH: LATIN PHRASES!

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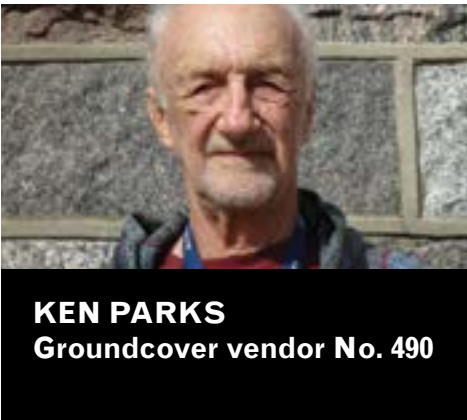
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Does the system work?

I am talking about the current system: its political economy and ideological foundation, the culture and social system we all have been socialized into. It's called "growing up," getting in compliance, that is. The December 30, 2022 issue of Ground-cover News has an article I wrote, "Mother Nature's Last Call," which talks about our current geological age of humans and capitalism as the anthropocene.

The victory of capitalism over feudalism was a centuries-long struggle for private property to replace the remaining commons as the dominant political economy. Feudalism privatized indigenous commons but created a social contract that gave peasants some rights to the land they lived on and worked. Private property is now regarded as the foundation for civilization and the creation of wealth. The social contract of feudalism viewed land use as some shared responsibility. The peasants had to give the lords a share of the crop but had rights to live on the land and benefit from their plot.

When the growing business class saw the profits possible from sheep's wool spun in the textile mills, they began the ideological, judicial and police/military campaign promoting the virtues of private property and the need to drive the peasantry off the land. You may have heard of the enclosure laws and vagrancy laws which



KEN PARKS
Groundcover vendor No. 490

created large numbers of refugees. Many Scots went to Ireland following promises of land; as their numbers grew, the overflow went to "the new world" as the settler class that supported the privatization of indigenous land.

Land-hungry peasants flooded "America" and became working class or settlers on indigenous land. The Indian wars began with the arrival of Europeans and coincided with the slave trade. Investing in violence for land and slaves was the business of the colonial phase of capitalism. The lure of profit brought many into "the pursuit of happiness," as it was called.

Capitalism is still evolving as it privatizes your time with many wonderful appearances of happiness that seem irresistible. There is no doubt that capitalism has created amazing productive capacity.

Marx wrote positively about the

revolutionary changes from feudalism to capitalism as an important advance in social evolution, preparing the way for the next revolutionary leap to socialism and then communism as we fulfilled the vision of sharing that is deep in the heart of humanity. "From each according to their ability, to each based on their contribution" is the ethic of socialism. "From each according to their ability, to each according to their need" is the ethic of communism. The struggle is intense.

So is the system working? The capitalism of this epoch is designed to create large amounts of wealth, measured in capital, by extracting from nature and producing goods and services by human, animal or robot labor. This market mechanism, in which everything is a commodity for sale and speculation, has regular crises but is able to play financial games that basically move wealth from the bottom to the top. It is designed for that purpose.

There is constant tinkering with the financial flow but the main current creates a wealth gap that has unbalanced the world towards war as the solution to any looming economic crises. Sanctions have done more damage than the nuclear weapons which are prepared to destroy the world upon command.

We are in a life and death struggle. Natural law will overrule human law as our dysfunction continues.

Therefore, climate chaos. We are at the point of no return, greatly addicted to our comfort zone.

Definitely time to take a breath and reconsider reality. Do we have the nerve to consider a new social design that makes good work fun, productive and beneficial? Enough said. Time to work on redesigning our lives, especially towards "Democracy at Work" in the words of Richard Wolf's Course on Capitalism.

What did World War II resolve? The people wanted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the capitalist class wanted war. Hollywood was attacked first. "Salt of the Earth," an unsurpassable movie (and book) tells the story of this war. It has intensified since Star Wars (the Strategic Defense Initiative) and full spectrum domination warfare focused on information control. The capitalist designers and defenders have large amounts of money for their campaign which amounts to a war on the working class. If you say anything you will be accused of class warfare.

We have all the resources we need, particularly our ability to face reality as death approaches. People — foremost, young people — have some sense of big changes coming as the ideological wheels of fascism and communism are turning. It is time to talk intergenerationally about what we want to do.

Non-police crisis response piloting in Ypsilanti

ALEXANDRA GRANBERG
Groundcover contributor

Last month, Care-Based Safety, a grassroots group, announced that they have secured funding to pilot an unarmed, non-police crisis response program in Ypsilanti in mid-2023 – the first of its kind in Michigan, according to the group.

How the program – for now referred to by CBS as the Future Program – will look is still evolving.

Some elements will likely be included: mobile response groups on the streets and transformative justice tools – with focus on individual and community healing rather than punishment in the face of violence.

Another element will be an urgent response program through a public, 7-digit phone number, separate from 911 and with no referrals to police. Washtenaw County's mental health department currently provides a similar service for mental health crises – but unlike CBS's hope for the Future Program, that is a police collaboration.

CBS has asked several impacted groups for local feedback. They have also consulted similar, successful initiatives in cities across the US.

The idea is that the pilot will inform a model that can be scaled up and later implemented in all of Washtenaw County. Any existing actions here would not be duplicated by existing departments. Rather, the program seeks to fill a gap.

example mental health, overdose, post-violence situations and complaints.

Despite this, concerns about a non-police response have been voiced by Washtenaw County Sheriff Jerry Clayton, among others. One worry is that a seemingly non-violent situation can escalate into violence, requiring police.

According to a data review by the New York Times, however, it appears only a fraction of policing is devoted to handling violent crime. Citing the review, CBS writes that most emergency calls are about "interpersonal complaints, traffic-related issues, wellness checks and medical calls."

No police, no violence

Homelessness and mental illness are often more prevalent among incarcerated people than in the general population.

Members of CBS and CROS want to see a system that focuses on community well-being – preventing rather than criminalizing problematic behavior. In CBS's strategic plan published in February, the group states:

"We believe in a future where public health programs and infrastructure are resourced, including the creation of new, care-based programs, making policing and state-sponsored punishment obsolete."

Ideally, the new program will not be connected to police at all, providing an alternative to crises.

But Natalie Holbrook, a CBS member and spokesperson based in Ypsilanti, and part of the American Friends Service Committee, says she would "personally prefer 911 calls related to hunger or mental health crises to be directed to the program, over what is happening now."

A Washington Post investigation from 2015 showed that every fourth person who was killed by police suffered with mental illness. The AA City Council in its proposal states some of these deaths occur "where the deployment of police officers was not necessary."

Some police are also concerned about this. Among them, though not alone, is former Ann Arbor Police Chief Michael Cox, who told the Michigan Daily that mental health training is inadequate – and that therefore it is not ideal to send police to deal with mental health calls.

Mayor Christopher Taylor has said explicitly that police are overworked, forced to deal with situations best dealt with by unarmed personnel.

Violent failure

Reform remains the popular go-to among both local and federal politicians, when advocating change in the police system. But attempts at reform – whether material, intellectual or organizational – have proven insufficient in the past.

Body cameras, a type of material reform, were introduced on a wide scale shortly after police fatally shot Michael Brown in Ferguson in 2014. Three years later a study showed that the increased surveillance had not prevented police from using unwarranted violence. When police killed David McAtee in the summer of 2020, they had simply turned off their cameras.

Chokeholds had already been banned in New York for 20 years, when a police officer choked Eric Garner to death in 2014. The case drew attention and drove police reforms around the country.

Five years before George Floyd died under the knee of now-former policeman Derek Chauvin in Minneapolis, the city had carried out these types of reforms. Among them was a warning system to detect problematic cases within the police force. Chauvin, with 17 complaints filed against him at the time, had evidently escaped this.

Inherent violence

CBS states that re-training or reforming police "is not a viable solution, given that the underlying purpose of policing is fundamentally different from the underlying purpose of providing direct care."

Driving CBS and abolitionism, both of which have roots in the Civil Rights movement, is the idea that policing as a system is inherently violent.

In the words of abolitionist leader Mariame Kaba: "Everywhere, they have suppressed marginalized

populations to protect the status quo ... When a police officer brutalizes a black person, he is doing what he sees as his job."

The police and mass incarceration systems, they mean, are not broken but working as they were designed to – leaving nothing to "be fixed."

While CBS is informed by research and statistics, its members are also people of the community who in some way have been impacted by the current system, or love somebody who has been harmed by police – as is the case for Holbrook.

She believes the state is incapable of providing the care and protection that a community can. Holbrook dreams of strong neighborhoods that look after themselves; sharing power, "rather than handing it over to the state," which, she says, "takes individual power away."

"We simply want something else to rely on. A system rooted in care and compassion."

A river runs through it

So far, funding for CBS efforts comes from the Michigan Justice Fund with the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, and United Way of Washtenaw County.

At the time of writing, CBS is in the process of hiring two co-directors to head the pilot in Ypsilanti. The co-directors will help develop the program based on community feedback, as well as years of research and interviews with experts.

In April, CBS hopes to finalize the design in order to put the program to practice this summer. After that, the group will dissolve, having fulfilled its function – passing on the leadership to the new response team and Future Program.

Read more about the proposed program and background at linktr.ee/carebasedsafety

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Baked caramel popcorn

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:

5-7 quarts popped popcorn
2 cups brown sugar
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. vanilla
1 cup butter
½ cup light syrup
½ tsp. baking soda

Directions:

Melt butter and stir in brown sugar, corn syrup and salt. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Once boiling, leave for 5 minutes without stirring. Then remove from heat.

Add baking soda and vanilla. In a very large bowl, pour over popcorn and mix well. Spread onto 2 shallow



layer large cooking sheets. Bake at 250 degrees for one hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Cool and break apart.

Store in an airtight container.

Such a special treat, you won't be able to stop eating the corn!



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10:00 am In-person
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Good Friday: April 7th Stations of the Cross 12pm; Veneration of the Cross 1:30pm
Easter Vigil: April 8th, 8:00pm
Easter Sunday: April 9th, 8:30am, 10:30am, 12:30pm; 2:30pm Spanish Mass (no 5pm evening Mass)



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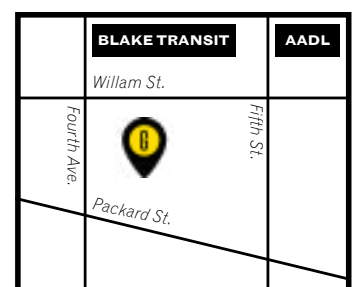
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